



*Rhagoriaeth i bawb – Excellence for all*

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg  
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate  
for Education and Training in Wales

**A report on**

**Ysgol Gynradd Dolwyddelan  
Dolwyddelan  
Conwy  
LL25 0SZ**

**Date of inspection: March 2013**

**by**

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education  
and Training in Wales**



During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

**Key Question 1: How good are the outcomes?**

**Key Question 2: How good is provision?**

**Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?**

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on its prospects for improvement.

In these evaluations, inspectors use a four-point scale:

| <b>Judgement</b>      | <b>What the judgement means</b>   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Excellent</b>      | Many strengths, including significant examples of sector-leading practice |
| <b>Good</b>           | Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement   |
| <b>Adequate</b>       | Strengths outweigh areas for improvement                                  |
| <b>Unsatisfactory</b> | Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths                        |

The report was produced in accordance with Section 28 of the Education Act 2005.

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## Context

Ysgol Gynradd Dolwyddelan is situated in the village of Dolwyddelan, about six miles from Betws-y-Coed. It serves the village itself and the surrounding rural area and it is maintained by Conwy local authority.

The school provides education for pupils between three and 11 years old. Children are admitted to the school part-time in the September following their third birthday and full-time in the September following their fourth birthday. During the inspection, there were 29 pupils on roll. The number of pupils has dropped a little since the last inspection. They are taught by two full-time teachers and one part-time teacher. Most teaching is through the medium of Welsh.

The area is described as one that is neither prosperous nor economically disadvantaged and pupils' attainment varies when they start school. The majority of pupils come from homes where Welsh is spoken. There are no pupils from ethnic backgrounds at the school. Three point four per cent (3.4%) of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is significantly lower than the percentages for the county and for Wales. Twenty per cent of pupils are on the school's additional learning needs register, which is a little lower than the national figure (21.2%).

The headteacher has been in post since September 2012, following a period of being in charge for two terms. She has responsibility for a class for four days.

The individual school budget per pupil for Ysgol Gynradd Dolwyddelan in 2012-2013 is £5,087. The maximum per pupil in primary schools in Conwy is £12,262 and the minimum is £3,081. Ysgol Gynradd Dolwyddelan is in 16<sup>th</sup> place out of the 60 primary schools in Conwy in terms of its school budget per pupil.

## Summary

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| <b>The school's current performance</b>       | <b>Adequate</b> |
| <b>The school's prospects for improvement</b> | <b>Good</b>     |

### Current performance

Ysgol Dolwyddelan's performance is adequate because:

- many pupils are making progress and achieving well;
- nearly all are confidently bilingual by the end of key stage 2;
- pupils across the school behave well and courteously, and they have a good attitude towards learning;
- there are rich learning experiences, the quality of the majority of teaching is good and support staff support learning effectively; and
- there is effective provision to promote wellbeing and an inclusive, homely ethos in which pupils feel happy and safe.

However:

- trends in results of teachers' assessments over time are lower than results for similar schools and the average for Wales;
- a minority of pupils are not making enough progress in reading in Welsh;
- there is not enough progress in pupils' extended writing skills in either language; and
- learning activities do not always extend pupils of all abilities fully.

### Prospects for improvement

Prospects for improvement are good because:

- the headteacher has a clear vision, which has been conveyed successfully to staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- all members of staff are clear about their roles, they support each other and work as a team;
- the school knows its own performance well and the governing body is aware of the way in which the school performs in comparison with similar schools;
- there are clear plans for improvement which focus on raising standards; and
- there is a good range of partnerships that have a positive effect on pupils' achievement.

## Recommendations

- R1 Raise standards in reading skills in Welsh
- R2 Improve the quality of extended writing in both languages
- R3 Strengthen planning processes in teaching in order to extend pupils of all abilities fully
- R4 Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning
- R5 Strengthen governors' ability to challenge the school's performance effectively

### **What happens next?**

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations. Estyn will monitor the school's progress.

## Main findings

### Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Adequate

#### Standards: Adequate

Most pupils start school with skills that are appropriate to their age, except in Welsh where the language is new to a minority of them.

In lessons and over time, many pupils make good progress in relation to their ability and previous performance. Most recall previous learning well and show good knowledge and understanding of what they have learnt in several subjects. Pupils who have additional learning needs make good progress in line with their age and ability. In some aspects of their work, pupils of higher ability do not achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils across the school listen well to their teachers and are very willing to offer answers or comments when speaking about their work. Most pupils in the Foundation Phase make good progress in their use of Welsh from the time they start school. Considering their linguistic background, their oral skills develop very quickly. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils communicate effectively in Welsh when dealing with various subjects. However, a minority use a rich vocabulary and correct syntax. Nearly all communicate effectively in English.

The majority of pupils make good progress in their Welsh reading skills. In the Foundation Phase, the best pupils read accurately with fluency and enjoyment. The ability of a minority of pupils to identify unfamiliar words is still developing. In key stage 2, most pupils read an appropriate range of texts with increasing accuracy and use their skills effectively to read for different purposes. A minority read aloud fluently and with good expression. A few of them have the skills to read a text quickly in order to gain an overall impression. Most pupils read English correctly and meaningfully. Many use their English reading skills effectively to glean and present information, using their translanguaging skills skilfully to present the information.

In the Foundation Phase, the majority of pupils make appropriate progress in their ability to write independently. They use increasing vocabulary and expressions, and are beginning to vary sentences and use punctuation well. In key stage 2, the majority use a variety of written forms effectively for various purposes. Punctuation and spelling skills are developing appropriately. However, pupils' ability to write creatively and at length in both languages has not developed sufficiently. Only a few pupils write lengthy pieces of work. Standards of handwriting and presentation of work are inconsistent.

There is no data report on pupils in the Foundation Phase in the report as the number of pupils who were assessed in 2012 is too small to report upon without identifying individual pupils. As this is the first year of publishing Foundation Phase data, there is no information about trends available.

In 2012, results for 11-year-old pupils at the expected level (level 4) were consistently lower than the national figures for all subjects, in except science, and were among

the lowest in the family of similar schools. In general, over a period of four years, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level in the four subjects was lower than averages for schools in the family and Wales. In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school's performance placed it, almost without exception, among the lower 50% and often among the bottom 25% of similar schools over the period.

The percentage of pupils who attained a higher level than expected (level 5) was higher than the family average but lower than the average for Wales, in English, mathematics and science, and placed the school in the lower 50% in 2012. Over a period of four years, the school's performance at the higher level was uneven and often placed it in the lower 50% of similar schools.

There has been no significant difference between boys' and girls' achievement or in the performance of pupils who are entitled to free school meals during recent years.

### **Wellbeing: Good**

Most pupils' awareness of keeping healthy and safe is good, and they understand its importance. They are proud of their school, feel safe and happy there and know to whom to turn for support and advice.

Most pupils are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They co-operate well together in their lessons and activities. However, their skills to improve their own work are only beginning to develop. A minority have the confidence and ability to assess their own work.

All pupils get along well together and standards of behaviour are high. Pupils of all ages play together happily at break time and lunch time. They are polite and courteous and show respect and care for their peers.

The attendance percentage over the last year is 93.6%, which is lower than the average for the family of similar schools and the whole of Wales. Over a period of four years, attendance has placed the school in the top 50% of similar schools in terms of the proportion of children who are entitled to free school meals. Punctuality is good.

The understanding of members of the School and Eco councils of their responsibilities in representing other pupils' opinions in the school community is beginning to develop. They feel that staff listen to them and respect their ideas.

By taking part in, and contributing to, a range of social events and activities, pupils have a strong awareness of their area and the local community.

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| <b>Key Question 2: How good is provision?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|---|-------------|

### **Learning experiences: Judgement**

The school provides a wide range of rich experiences that gain pupils' interest and respond effectively to the needs of most of them. The activities that are provided respond successfully to the requirements of the Foundation Phase, the National

Curriculum and religious education. Detailed and thorough planning ensures that learning experiences build successfully on most pupils' previous knowledge and understanding.

There is orderly and purposeful planning for developing pupils' communication and numeracy skills across the school. There is also effective provision for developing information and communication technology (ICT) skills, which ensures that key stage 2 pupils glean and present information and ideas skilfully. Stimulating opportunities are provided for pupils to write for various purposes across the curriculum. However, planning is not fully effective when developing extended writing in both languages.

Emphasis is placed on the Cwricwlwm Cymreig and on developing Welsh for all pupils. Units of work such as one on the local area promote this effectively.

The school's commitment to sustainability continues to develop. Opportunities to raise awareness of global citizenship such as when celebrating the Chinese New Year and links through the Comenius programme are provided. There is effective provision to develop entrepreneurship and promote fair trade among key stage 2 pupils.

### **Teaching: Adequate**

There is a good working relationship between all staff and pupils at the school, which leads to a positive learning environment in classes. Staff have suitable subject knowledge and they model good oral language.

Most lessons build effectively on previous work. However, there is not always detailed enough planning on the basis of age and ability range in a class. As a result, at times there is not enough of a challenge to ensure that pupils of higher ability achieve as well as they could.

In the majority of lessons, interesting learning activities, an orderly classroom structure and skilful questioning challenge all pupils successfully. Good use is made of resources, including ICT, and opportunities are provided for pupils to co-operate effectively in groups. In a minority of lessons, learning experiences do not respond effectively to the range of age and ability.

Marking is thorough and constructive comments summarise what is good in the work and what needs to be done to improve it. Effective arrangements are in place for tracking pupils' progress. However, assessment for learning strategies and the practice of including pupils in the process of assessing their own work have not been developed sufficiently.

Reports that are presented to parents offer clear information about pupils' ability and they meet statutory requirements.

### **Care, support and guidance: Good**

The school provides a high level of care, support and guidance for all its pupils, which has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and commitment. The school offers



valuable experiences that promote pupils' personal, spiritual and moral development well. Pupils have opportunities to foster a caring attitude to others through many charitable and cultural activities.

Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and provision for promoting fitness and physical health is good.

The school has beneficial links with specialist agencies such as the educational welfare service, medical and social services, the county's additional learning needs department and the police. All pupils receive good support from all school staff.

The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and they are not a cause for concern.

Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs is good. It is ensured that pupils are identified early and there is beneficial provision for them. Individual education plans are produced and reviewed effectively in co-operation with pupils and their parents. Good use is made of an assistant to meet pupils' specific requirements and to promote their development effectively.

### **Learning environment: Good**

There is a family atmosphere at the school and a very homely feel. It is a happy and pleasant community and there is a friendly atmosphere among all staff and pupils. There is an inclusive ethos and all pupils have equal entitlement to all the school's provision. A good emphasis is placed on recognising, respecting and celebrating diversity.

The building is spacious and effective use is made of it. Colourful and attractive displays create an attractive learning environment. The school site is very pleasant and there is enough room outside. The outdoor area is very attractive and the yard and play areas are of high quality. The areas are used appropriately.

The school has an extensive supply of learning resources, which are in good condition. They are stored in an orderly manner, and can be used conveniently by all the school's staff and pupils.

The building is suitable for the disabled, and it is kept clean and tidy inside and outside.

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?</b> | <b>Good</b> |
|--|-------------|

### **Leadership: Good**

The headteacher has a clear vision that is based on ensuring high standards and on children's wellbeing. She conveys that vision effectively to staff, pupils, parents and governors. She offers a clear direction for the life and work of the school. The school is an orderly community and it has clear structures and policies. This ensures that all members of staff work as a part of a team and understand their role in implementing the school's plans.

The governing body is supportive of the school's work and helps to offer a strategic direction. The headteacher's reports to the body are thorough and comprehensive and they make good use of data analysis. As a result, governors are aware of the school's performance in comparison with that of similar schools. However, their role as critical friends, and their ability to challenge the school's performance, has not been developed fully.

The school pays good attention to national and local priorities and the need to raise standards of literacy. The principles of the Foundation Phase receive good attention and health and fitness and bilingualism are promoted successfully. Development of pupils' thinking skills is developing appropriately across the school.

### **Improving quality: Good**

In a short time, the headteacher has succeeded in getting to know the school thoroughly. She has a secure understanding of the school's performance, its strengths and aspects for further development. Appropriate arrangements have been established to discover the opinions of pupils, parents and governors. The headteacher considers a range of information that includes data on standards and a detailed analysis of trends over time. All of this, along with lesson observations and examining pupils' work, contributes effectively to the self-evaluation report, which offers a balanced and accurate picture of the school.

Information is used effectively in the process of improving quality, and priorities focus clearly on raising standards. There are suitable strategies for achieving intentions, and appropriate use is made of measurable and challenging targets for measuring progress, in addition to specific time limits.

The school is developing into an effective learning community. Networks of professional practice that have been created with other schools in the catchment area make an important contribution towards developing provision and raising standards, particularly in literacy.

### **Partnership working: Good**

The school has developed effective links with parents and the community. These links have a positive effect on pupils' standards of achievement and wellbeing. Staff communicate effectively with parents and they are very supportive of the life and work of the school. The school benefits from a constructive link with the community, including a strong link with local chapels. Close co-operation with local community enterprises have contributed extensively to improving provision for ICT and to developing the outdoor area for the Foundation Phase.

An appropriate range of external agencies and organisations, such as health and social services, contribute their expertise well in order to support the school's work. The recent strong link between the school, the local authority and the advisory service has led to improvements in provision and standards across the school.

The close relationship with the cylch Ti a Fi nursery group, which meets in the school hall, ensures that children settle quickly and well after transferring to the Foundation Phase.

Arrangements for transferring pupils to the secondary school prepare older pupils well for the next stage in their education. The strong link between the school, the local secondary school and schools in the catchment area ensures effective co-operation in order to moderate and standardise work. In addition, joint training is arranged with nearby schools to comply with national and local priorities. This contributes well to planning, providing resources and ensuring quality jointly.

**Resource management: Adequate**

The school manages its resources effectively. The school has an appropriate level of staff to teach the curriculum effectively. The use that it makes of support staff is good and has a positive effect on pupils' achievement and wellbeing. The school makes beneficial use of staff expertise in order to enrich experiences and improve the quality of teaching.

Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are appropriate and good opportunities are provided for all staff in line with the school's priorities.

Expenditure of funds is managed carefully by the headteacher and the governing body with the assistance of a local authority officer. This ensures that the school operates within its budget and that there is a good supply of resources which respond to the school's needs. Funding is allocated every year for resources in line with the school's priorities.

Considering pupils' outcomes, the school provides adequate value for money.

## Appendix 1

### Commentary on performance data

Trends in the school's performance data should be considered with care as numbers of pupils at the end of both key stages are small.

There is no data report on Foundation Phase pupils as the number of pupils who were assessed in 2012 is too small to report upon without identifying individual pupils. As this is the first year of publishing Foundation Phase data, there is no information about trends available.

In 2012, the school's performance in the core subject indicator (the percentage of pupils who attain level 4 in a combination of Welsh or English, mathematics and science) was lower than the average for the whole of Wales and among the highest in the family of similar schools. In general, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected level in the four languages has been lower than the averages for schools in the family and in Wales over the last four years. In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, the school's performance has placed it among the bottom 25% during the last two years.

The percentage of pupils who attain the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics in combination has been lower than the averages for the family and for Wales in three of the last four years.

In 2012, the percentage of pupils who achieved level 5 or higher at the end of key stage 2 was higher than the averages for the family but lower than the averages for Wales in English, mathematics and science. It was lower than the averages for the family and Wales in Welsh. The school's performance at the higher level has varied over the last four years. The percentage of pupils who attain the higher level has been higher than the average percentages for the family of schools and for Wales in two of these years.

In comparison with schools that have similar levels of entitlement to free school meals over a period of four years, the school's performance at the higher level has varied and has placed it between the bottom 25% and the top 25% during the period.

There is no significant gap between the achievement of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and the remainder over time.

## Appendix 2

### Stakeholder satisfaction report

#### Responses to parent/carer questionnaires

Twelve completed questionnaires were received from parents/carers. The level of parents' satisfaction is high, and is higher than the average for primary schools.

All parents indicated that they are satisfied with the school in general. They all agree that their child likes school, and that he/she had support to settle in well when he/she started school. They all feel that pupils behave well in school and that their child is safe there. All parents agree that their children are making good progress at school. All who replied agree that appropriate additional support is available as necessary. All agree that homework builds well on what is being learnt at school and that they receive regular information about their child's progress. Nearly all who replied agree that their child has been prepared well for moving on to the next school. They all agree that there is a variety of activities, including trips and visits.

All pupils agree that the school is well run and feel comfortable about raising any issue. All understand the school's system for complaints.

#### Responses to learner questionnaires

Learner questionnaires were completed by 16 key stage 2 pupils. Responses are very positive, and are higher than the national average for primary schools.

All pupils feel that they are doing well at school and that teachers help them to become more mature and shoulder responsibility. All pupils feel safe and know to whom to turn in the case of anxiety or to ask for advice. They all agree that the school teaches them how to keep healthy. They all say that homework helps them to understand and do their work. Nearly all are of the opinion that other children behave well and that they are able to do their work.

## Appendix 3

### The inspection team

|                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| Goronwy Morris   | Reporting Inspector |
| Dylan Jones      | Lay Inspector       |
| Llinos Jones     | Peer Inspector      |
| Nia Jones-Artell | School Nominee      |

## Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Estyn website ([www.estyn.gov.uk](http://www.estyn.gov.uk))

### Year groups, the Foundation Phase and key stages

Schools use a common system of numbering year groups from the start of compulsory schooling to 18 years of age. This system emphasises the importance of continuity and eases communication among schools, governing bodies, parents and local authorities.

The following table sets out the age ranges relevant to each year group. For example, Year 1 refers to the group of pupils who reach the age of six and Year 13 is the year group who reach the age of 18 during the academic year.

Primary phase:

|      |     |     |     |     |     |     |      |       |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-------|
| Year | N   | R   | Y1  | Y2  | Y3  | Y4  | Y5   | Y6    |
| Ages | 3-4 | 4-5 | 5-6 | 6-7 | 7-8 | 8-9 | 9-10 | 10-11 |

Secondary phase:

|      |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Year | Y7    | Y8    | Y9    | Y10   | Y11   | Y12   | Y13   |
| Ages | 11-12 | 12-13 | 13-14 | 14-15 | 15-16 | 16-17 | 17-18 |

The Foundation Phase and key stages cover the following year groups:

|                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Foundation Phase | Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 |
| Key stage 2      | Year 3 to Year 6                      |
| Key stage 3      | Year 7 to Year 9                      |
| Key stage 4      | Year 10 and Year 11                   |

## **Glossary of terms – Primary**

### **Foundation Phase indicator (FPI)**

Progress in learning through the Foundation Phase is indicated by outcomes (from outcome 1 to outcome 6).

The Foundation Phase indicator (FPI) relates to the expected performance in three areas of learning in the Foundation Phase:

- literacy, language and communication in English or Welsh first language
- mathematical development; and
- personal and social development, wellbeing and cultural diversity.

By the end of the Foundation Phase, at the age of seven, pupils are expected to reach outcome 5 and the more able to reach outcome 6.

Pupils must achieve the expected outcome (outcome 5) in the three areas above to gain the Foundation Phase indicator.

### **The core subject indicator (CSI)**

Progress in learning through key stage 2 is indicated by levels (level 1 to level 5).

The core subject indicator in key stage 2 relates to the expected performance in the core subjects of the National Curriculum:

- English or Welsh first language
- mathematics; and
- science

By the end of the key stage 2, at the age of 11, pupils are expected to reach level 4 and more able pupils to reach level 5.

Pupils must gain at least the expected level (level 4) in the three core subjects to gain the core subject indicator.

### **All-Wales Core Data sets**

Inspection reports may refer to a school's performance relative to a family of schools or to schools with a broadly similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals.

In relation to free school meals, schools are placed into one of five bands according to the three-year trend in the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals in the school. The school's performance is then placed into quartiles (from the top 25% to the bottom 25%) in relation to how well it is doing compared with other schools in the same free school meal band.

The Welsh Government created the families of schools (typically a group of 11 schools) to enable schools to compare their performance with that of similar schools across Wales. The composition of the families draws on a number of factors. These include the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion living in the 20% most deprived areas of Wales. They also draw on the proportion of pupils with special education needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language.